

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1425

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UN, OAU, NI, XF

SUBJECT: FMG TILTS FURTHER TOWARD ARABS

REF: LAGOS 8201

BEGIN SUMMARY. FMG HAS TILTED FURTHER TOWARD ARABS WITH FORMAL STATEMENT BLAMING CONFLICT ON ISRAEL, \$1.5 MILLION GRANT FOR ARAB VICTIMS OF CURRENT WAR, AND FRESH WARNING OF POSSIBLE BREAK WITH GOI. END SUMMARY.

1. IN GOWON MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN CHARGE AND ISRAELI AMBASSADOR OCTOBER 12, AND IN FORMAL FMG ATATEMENT SAME DAY, FMG REVEALED FURTHER TILT TOWARD ARABS IN ITS POSTURE ON MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

2. MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN CHARGE, GOWON EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH ARAB COUNTRIES FOR "LEGITIMATE RECOVERY" OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND SORROW OVER CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, AND MADE GRANT OF ONE MILLION NAIRA (\$1.5 MILLION) TO

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AID "ARAB VICTIMS OF CURRENT WAR" IN ME. IN LATER

SESSION WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, PRESS REPORTS THAT GOWON BLAMED PRESENT ME SITUATION ON "REFUSAL OF ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED ARAB LAND" AND EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN OVER BOTH CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AS RESULT ISRAELI AIR ACTION AND FACT THAT ISRAELI FORCES HAD CROSSED 1967 CEASE-FIRE LINE INTO SYRIA. HEAD OF STATE AGAIN URGED ISRAEL TO RECOGNIZE THAT ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BY WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND WARNED THAT "FURTHER DETERIORATION IN PRESENT SITUATION" WOULD JEOPARDIZE GOI-FMG RELATIONS.

3. FIRST OFFICIAL FMG STATEMENT ON ME SITUATION NOTES DEEP NIGERIAN CONCERN AT CURRENT CONFLICT "INVOLVING ATTACK ON TERRITORY OF MEMBER-STATE OF OAU" AND PINS RESPONSIBILITY "ENTIRELY ON ISRAEL WHICH HAS STUBBORNLY AND ARROGANTLY DEFIED APPEALS BY OAU, NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND UN TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES." STATEMENT ADDS THAT CONFLICT "WHICH IS MANIFESTLY DANGER TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY, COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF ISRAEL HAD LISTENED TO REASON AND HAD WITHDRAWN FROM OCCUPIED EGYPTIAN AND OTHER ARAB TERRITORIES." FMG THEN CALLED ON ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES "AND TO STOP FURTHER AGGRESSION AGAINST EGYPT AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN AREA." FMG, STATEMENT CONCLUDED, STRONGLY SUPPORTS EGYPT AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES "INVOLVED IN THEIR LEGITIMATE EFFORT TO RECOVER THEIR TERRITORIES OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL."

4. COMMENT: AS ANTICIPATED REFTTEL, COMBINATION OF ISRAELI GAINS AND PRESSURE FROM ARABS AND OTHER AFRICANS CLEARLY AT WORK ON FMG STANCE, WHICH IS TILTING PERCEPTIBLY TOWARD ARABS. CASH GRANT AND STRONG STATEMENT NONETHELESS REPRESENT STEPS SIGNIFICANTLY SHORT OF BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH GOI, ULTIMATE SANCTION WHICH GOWON EVIDENTLY STILL RELUCTANT TO APPLY. HOWEVER, HANDWRITING IS CLEAR ON THE WALL, AND IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT TAKE MANY MORE AFRICAN STATES BREAKING WITH GOI OR MAJOR ISRAELI SUCCESSES TO PUSH FMG OVER THE BRINK.
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